

India Street Neighborhood Study
George Lawrence House
also known as the Snow House
35 India Street
Nantucket
Nantucket County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-1045

HABS
MASS
10-NANT
75F-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
INDIA STREET NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY
GEORGE LAWRENCE HOUSE
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Location: 35 India Street (on north side), Nantucket
Massachusetts.

Present Owner: Dr. David B. Miller

Present Occupant: Dr. David B. Miller

Present Use: Seasonal residence

Brief Statement
of Significance: A typical Nantucket house of the late eighteenth
century; part of the India Street Neighborhood
Study (MASS-1013).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1788 -- Joseph Harris bought from George Lawrence, retired mariner, "house which I built in Egypt", paying three hundred pounds.
- 1792 -- Seth Bunker bought from Joseph Harris for three hundred and thirty pounds.
- 1795 -- Martha Swain, "widow of David", bought "land and dwelling house which George Lawrence built in the 3rd Squadron of the Wesco Acre Lots" from Seth Bunker for \$1200.
- 1799 -- Gilbert Swain, mariner, from the heirs of Martha Swain.
- 1880 -- George H. Cary from the Estate of Gilbert Swain.
- 1882 -- Andrew G. Hussey from George H. Cary "the home-
stead of the late Gilbert Swain".
- 1887 -- Moses S. Beach from Andrew G. Hussey.
- 1896 -- Dominicus and Martha J. Koppman from heirs of
Moses S. Beach.
- 1903 -- Jennie Finley from Martha J. Koppman.
- 1920 -- Fannie D. Snow from Jennie Finley.
- 1940 -- Frances Devens Parrish inherited from her mother,
Fannie D. Snow, and Land Courted the property July
10, 1940.

1969 to date -- David B. Miller from Estate of Frances
Devins Parrish.

(Abstract: Records at Registry of Deeds, Nantucket,
Massachusetts.)

2. Date of erection: About 1786. (Abstract: Book II, Page
274, Registry Deeds, Nantucket, Mass.)
3. Architect: Probably built by housewright George Lawrence,
who was building houses for immediate sale in the area.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: This was built as a
simple, four bay, central chimney house, reflecting the
Quaker influence.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Many changes have
been made. Two dormers have been added to the south
roof and an ell put on the east side, as well as an ex-
tension at the rear of the house.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

This house is located in that area originally described as
the Third Squadron of Wesco Acre Lots, at a place commonly
known by the name of Micah's Pond. India Street in the early
1800's was largely occupied by the wealthier families, many
of whom derived large profit from the East India trade as well
as from whaling. According to the Portfolio, written in 1811,
it was first called India Row; later it became Pearl Street
and still later the name was changed back to India Street.
When this house was built, the street was known as Pearl Street.
Westminster Street to the north was formerly called Clay Lane,
and Micah's Pond extended from that area to the central part
of India Street.

The deed of 1788 described the house as being in "Egypt", which
apparently was only a nickname for the section which at that
time was "as dark as Egypt".

George Lawrence was a mariner who on retirement became a house-
wright. He owned a large section of the middle section of India
Street and sold house lots with or without houses he had built.
He later removed to New York where he soon died of yellow fever
in 1798.

Gilbert Swain was a mariner, the son of Captain David Swain
who was master on whaling voyages out of Nantucket in 1771 and
1772.

The property remained in the Swain family from 1795 until 1880.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: Old photograph of "Pearl Street" in Nantucket Illustrated by A. Wittemann, 1888; Land Court Document 11249, Certificate 5713.

2. Bibliography:

Wittemann, A. Nantucket Illustrated. New York: Albertype Co., 1888.

Prepared by Marie M. Coffin
Nantucket, Massachusetts
January, 1971.

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of the India Street Neighborhood Study (MASS-1013) made in the summer of 1970 by the Historic American Buildings Survey on Nantucket, Massachusetts. This is the fifth summer project of a continuing HABS comprehensive survey of the early architecture and urban design of Nantucket financed by a grant from the Nantucket Historical Trust.

The project was under the general supervision of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Director was Professor F. Blair Reeves, A.I.A., of the University of Florida. Historical information was provided by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Photographs are by Jack E. Boucher of Linwood, New Jersey. The material was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Mrs. Constance Werner Ramirez, August 1971.